

STEPHEN M. LINSKY – WARD 2 ALDERMAN

FALL 2008 CONSTITUENT UPDATE

Hello Everyone:

Once again, it's wonderful to be able to report to you on my service this past year as your ward representative on the Board of Aldermen. In addition to issuing annual reports and publishing notices in the Newton TAB, I periodically post items, including this report, on the city's website at: <http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/Aldermen/constituents.asp>. I also hold monthly constituent office hours at the Newton Senior Center on Walnut Street.

This past year has been, as I anticipated, a fairly momentous one.

Newton North

A contract was finally reached on the Newton North project only after a number of major features were modified, including the replacement of a theater with an auditorium. I was able, however, to secure a sufficient amount to be set aside to assure the site's landscaping. Despite these modifications, I have continued to work to assure the delivery of a comfortable and energy efficient facility. The ability to achieve operational savings remains one of the chief reasons I, and others, supported a new building. Consequently, I have objected to any change that would negatively affect these lifecycle savings.

Future Building Projects

My Ward 2 colleagues and I have docketed an item to review the process by which the city engages in public building projects so that we apply lessons learned, particularly from our most recent high school projects, in advance of any future building project. Learning requires communication. While we have pressed to keep Newton residents as informed about the Newton North project as possible, the project's management team has not always provided timely or complete project updates either on the city's website, or, as I had suggested, on a separate website dedicated to the project.

Budget Process

While I supported the override initiative that was not approved by the voters, I subsequently joined with other aldermen to make our budget more responsive to the needs of the city. The budget process this year marked, I hope, the beginning of an era where we more thoroughly engage all the resources in the city. To this end, a citizen's advisory group was formed to offer its expertise and recommendations on various aspects of city operations in advance of next year's fiscal budget.

Promoting Alternatives

I continue to engage in efforts to creatively and responsibly address the city's needs in the face of an ongoing economic crisis. I am pleased to report I was able to influence the process by which the city procured additional property adjacent to the city's holdings at Crystal Lake that lessened the risk to the city and assured its affordability. I also propose we replace two of our branch libraries with community-based facilities that retain reading rooms and lending libraries. And while I support deployment of technological innovations wherever feasible, I was among those who insisted that the city run a trial of an automated trash pick-up before we committed to a new, long term contract.

Public Safety and Transportation

Now that the old contract dispute with the Firefighters union was resolved through arbitration, I intend to help support negotiations of a new contract that proceeds without rancor while we work together on longer range issues. As Chairman of Public Safety and Transportation, I have also helped advocate for safer routes to schools to encourage children to walk to schools as part of a state and national campaign to promote healthier lifestyles among youth.

As always, I am interested in hearing from you, whether it is during my annual fall walking tour of the district, or at any other time, by contacting me at: (617) 796-1701 or at: slinsky@newtonma.gov